



# Iowa Department of Human Services

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## DHS public records policy

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- **Many DHS records are public.** The department maintains vast amounts of records, reports, and other information. Most of it is available to the public. Aggregate client and aggregate personnel information is public.
- **Confidential records.** Many records are gathered in confidence and must be strictly protected.
  - Individual client records are not public.
  - De-identified client information that could lead to real persons are not public.
  - Personnel records are not public. Dates of employment and salary records are public.
  - The names of people who report child abuse or neglect are not public.
- **Public DHS records are almost always provided free of charge.** This includes:
  - Public records on the department's web site, [dhs.iowa.gov](http://dhs.iowa.gov).
  - Public records already compiled in the way requested.
  - Public records that require a total of up to three hours to assemble and to review to protect confidential information.
- **The DHS response to requests for public records is consistent regardless of:**
  - Who is asking.
  - How the public information will be used.
  - Whether the requestor cites state or federal open records laws.
- **The DHS response to requests from the public for public records is speedy.** The agency will attempt to respond within 10 business days.
- **The DHS will charge a fee to produce public documents when the actual cost of doing so is not incidental.**
  - The fee will never exceed actual cost.
  - Actual cost is:
    - ✓ The actual cost of copies produced by printer or copier, with the first 30 pages provided for free. Actual cost of printed copies is 10 cents/page.
    - ✓ An administrative fee of \$32/hour excluding the first three hours. The fee applies to time to locate records, personnel time to screen records to delete information that is not public, and personnel time to make copies and PDFs as needed. The DHS estimates that large groups of emails, including attachments and chains, can be screened and redacted at a rate of two minutes each.
    - ✓ A fee of \$60/hour for electronic data or records that require special processing to format, edit, or compile. If the data requiring special processing is maintained or administered by a third party, the requestor will pay the normal hourly rate charged by the third party to the department.
  - The department will estimate the fee and will notify the requestor.
    - ✓ If the fee is significant, the requestor is expected to pay in advance.
    - ✓ If the actual cost is less than estimated, the balance will be refunded.
    - ✓ If the actual cost is greater than estimated, the requestor will receive the records gathered to date and will be informed of an estimate to complete the work.
- **Contacting the public information officer.** Contact the PIO at (515) 281-4848 or [rmunns@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:rmunns@dhs.state.ia.us) when:
  - Charging a fee for the production of public records.
  - In need of advice about responding to a request for public records.